

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 MCE-00 ACDA-12 AID-05
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FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4018

C O N F I D E N T I A L MUSCAT 0163

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, MU
SUBJECT: OMANI INTEREST IN M-16 RIFLES

REF (A) STATE 014068, (B) 77 MUSCAT 1819, (C) 77 STATE 303974,
(D) 77 MUSCAT 1796

1. DCM ORALLY CONVEYED RESPONSE REF A TO CHIEF STAFF OFFICER OF
SULTAN OF OMAN'S LAND FORCES (SOLF) ON JAN 28, OMITTING PRICE QUOTA-
TIONS. DCM SAID EITHER FMS OR COMMERCIAL CHANNEL COULD BE
USED BUT THAT COMMERCIAL ROUTE WOULD PROBABLY BE FASTER. DCM
GAVE COLT'S ADDRESS TO SOLF.

2. WE NOTE THAT REF A OMITTED REFERENCE TO SOLF'S DESIRE DISPOSE
OF ITS PRESENT STOCK OF FN 7.62'S ON WORLD MARKET. ACCORDINGLY,
WE ASSUME THIS IS NOT NECESSARILY AN OBSTACLE AND SO STATED
TO STAFF OFFICER. SUGGEST, HOWEVER, THAT DEPARTMENT GIVE US
GUIDANCE ON THIS POINT. WE WILL TRY TO DETERMINE SOLF PLANS
ALONG THESE LINES AS THEY DEVELOP.

3.. REGARDING POINT RAISED FINAL PARA REF A, WE BELIEVE DE-
PARTMENT UNDERESTIMATES SIZE OF OMANI ARMED FORCES. SOLF
CONSISTS OF OVER 11,000 MEN AND EXPECTS STABILIZE AT ABOUT
THAT FIGURE. THERE IS ALSO THE 3,000-MAN TRIBAL FORCE KNOWN
AS FIRQA, ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT CERTAIN THAT THIS FORCE WILL USE
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THE M-16. SOLF STAFF OFFICER STRESSED THAT A MAINTENANCE RE-
SERVE WILL BE NECESSARY AND THAT SOLF WOULD HOPE TO CONVINCE
OMANI AIR FORCE AND NAVY TO STANDARDIZE ON M-16 AS WELL, TO
EXTENT THEY NEED SUCH WEAPON. IN ANY CASE, HE EXPLAINED,
THE 14,500 FIGURE IS APPROXIMATE ONLY.

4. SOLF'S NEXT STEP IS TO GET PRICE AND DELIVERY QUOTATIONS,

PRESUMABLY FROM COLT DIRECTLY, AND THEN REACH FINAL DECISION
ON WHETHER M-16 IS THE WEAPON THAT OMANIS WANT. STAFF
OFFICER PROMISED TO KEEP EMBASSY IN THE PICTURE.
WOLLE

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